

REMARKS

Initially, Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the thorough examination and detailed Office Action explaining the Examiner's rationale for rejecting the claims. Although Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's ultimate conclusions, the detailed comments and thoughtful illustrations provided by the Examiner have indicated to Applicant where the specific areas of disagreement lie. As a result, this response concentrates on the disputed issues to more effectively resolve these disagreements.

In the outstanding office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 16; objected to claim 12; and allowed claims 6-9 and 15. By this amendment, Applicant adds new claim 20 and cancels claim 12. Claims 1-20 are pending and under consideration.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner allowed claims 6-9 and 15. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's acknowledgement that these claims recite allowable subject matter.

The Examiner objected to claim 12 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but acknowledged that it would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's acknowledgement that this claim recites allowable subject matter and submits a new claim in independent form reciting the subject matter deemed allowable by the examiner. Specifically, new claim 20 is based on canceled claim 12.

Regarding the Specification

Portions of the specification were textually edited to enhance readability of the overall patent application. These changes do not introduce new matter.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,077,131 to Fukuda,

("Fukuda"). Office Action at pages 2 to 3. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's outstanding rejection.

The Examiner apparently has construed the male fitting of Fukuda to contain a "base plate" that is on the top side of the male contact portion (See, Fukuda, Fig. 8, "22"; attachment to Office Action).

Applicant's claim language, however, recites that the "plate-shaped contact protrusion includes a base plate component *longitudinally extending* from said conductor clamping portion..." (Application, claims 1, 6 and 10). Similarly, claims 14 and 16 both recite that the "plate-shaped contact means includes a base means *longitudinally extending* from said conductor clamping means..."

Figure 1 of Fukuda shows that the only part of the male fitting longitudinally extending from the conductor clamping portion is the very lowest part (Fig. 8, "21") of the male fitting, but that is not what the Examiner construes as being the base plate. The other portions of the male fitting in Fukuda, in particular the portion that the Examiner does construe as the base plate (Fig. 8, "22", "23", "24", "22b" and "23b"), do not extend longitudinally from the conductor clamping portion. Instead, they axially extend as tabs off of the bottom plate (Fig. 8, "21") so that they may be folded as shown in Fig. 8. Because axially extending tab "22" cannot fairly be interpreted as a base plate "longitudinally extending" from the conductor clamping portion, Fukuda does not have each and every limitation of the claim. MPEP 2131. For at least this reason, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection.

Claims 2-5 all depend from claim 1. Thus, these claims are allowable for at least the same reasons discussed above for claim 1. Similarly, claims 11 and 13 both depend from claim 10. Thus, these claims are allowable for at least the same reasons discussed above for claim 10.

Provisional Obviousness-Type Double Patenting Rejection

The Examiner provisionally rejected claim 1 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of copending Application No. 10/196,164. Initially, Applicant thanks the Examiner for pointing out this potential rejection. Since the present application has an earlier filing

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date than Application No. 10/196,164 and Applicant submits that this would be the only remaining rejection, "the examiner should then withdraw that rejection in one of the applications (e.g., the application with the earlier filing date) and permit the application to issue as a patent." MPEP 804(I)(B). Applicant will again address this issue once the claims in either application are in condition for allowance.


In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: July 16, 2003

By: 
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Appendix

Version of Amendments With Markings to Show Changes Made

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

At page 1, amend the second full paragraph to read as follows:

Various attempts have heretofore been undertaken to develop a male terminal fitting of the type having a plate-shaped contact protrusion as disclosed in Figs. 1 and 2. In such a male terminal fitting, the plate-shaped contact segment 1 is fabricated first by stamping a conductive thin metal sheet in a developed stage and subsequently bending the thin metal sheet into a final product. In particular, the plate-shaped contact protrusion 1 is comprised of an elongated base plate component 2, and an overlapping fold plate component laterally extending from one end of the base plate component and folded to lie over the base plate component 2. A [a] distal end 3a of the overlapping fold plate component 3 is further folded toward the base plate component 2 such that a tabular portion 4 is formed. The presence of the hollow portion 4 enables the plate-shaped contact protrusion 1 to have a desired thickness L1 even when using the thin sheet material.

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